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SENATE RESOLUTION

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WHEREAS, Under the misnomer of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, the current North Korean government is a continuation of the absolute dynastic dictatorship started by Kim Il-sung in 1948 after the bifurcation of Korea at the end of World War II; and

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WHEREAS, Following his death in 1994, Kim Il-sung was succeeded by his eldest son, Kim Jong-il, and was designated as the "Eternal President" by the North Korean constitution; on December 17, 2011, Kim Jong-il succumbed to a heart attack and his youngest son, Kim Jong-un, was immediately installed as his successor; and

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WHEREAS, The majority of the North Korean people have experienced unimaginable suffering during the regimes of all 3 dictators; the systemic ideological indoctrination in support of the "cult of personality" glorifying the dynasty amounts to a state religion; loyalty to this leadership cult determines not only social status but also employment, housing, and other resources, as well as such basic necessities, such as access to healthcare and even food; and

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WHEREAS, The North Korean government's top priority is total control of all aspects of life in North Korea; all

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1 information, artistic expression, academic works, and media
2 activity within its borders is strictly limited, as is freedom
3 of speech; attempted defection, "slander" against the ruling
4 party or its leaders, listening to foreign broadcasts, writing
5 "reactionary" letters, or possession of "reactionary" printed
6 matter is met with severe punishments and confiscation of
7 assets; and

8 WHEREAS, In addition to the aforementioned and numerous
9 incidents of human rights abuses that continue to occur in
10 North Korea, the government has committed far more serious
11 acts, such as the execution of political prisoners, other
12 outspoken opponents of the regime, and certain "repatriated"
13 defectors, as well as members of outlawed religions and
14 organizations; these executions are sometimes performed at
15 public meetings attended by workers, students, and
16 schoolchildren; and

17 WHEREAS, The North Korean government currently holds
18 almost a quarter of a million political prisoners in camps
19 under deplorable conditions; forced labor, beatings, torture,
20 and executions are common and those who survive such treatment
21 often die from disease, starvation, and overexposure;
22 eyewitness testimony provided to the United States Congress by
23 survivors of these camps report that inmates are used as slave
24 labor for the production of exported goods, as targets for

1 martial arts practice, and the subjects of chemical and
2 biological weapons testing; and

3 WHEREAS, In the early 1990s, more than 2 million
4 inhabitants of North Korea died of starvation due to the
5 failure of the North Korean government-operated centralized
6 agricultural and distribution systems; a 2002 United
7 Nations-European Union survey indicated that one out of every
8 10 North Korean children are acutely malnourished and 4 out of
9 10 are chronically malnourished; and

10 WHEREAS, Although the United States has provided more than
11 2 million tons of food to the North Korean people through the
12 World Food Program since 1995, the North Korean government
13 continues to prevent the World Food Program from monitoring the
14 delivery of food aid and denies the use of Korean-speaking
15 natives to help and travel access throughout the country; and

16 WHEREAS, The resultant risk of starvation, threat of
17 persecution, and lack of personal freedoms have caused hundreds
18 of thousands of North Koreans to flee, primarily into China,
19 where the women are often at risk of being kidnapped and sold
20 as brides, concubines, or forced into prostitution; in spite of
21 China's obligation as a party to the 1951 United Nations
22 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees as well as the
23 1967 Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees, the Chinese

1 government is cooperating with North Korean officials to locate
2 North Koreans who are in China without official permission; the
3 Chinese government classifies those seeking asylum as
4 "economic migrants" and returns them to North Korea, without
5 regard to the serious threat of persecution that awaits them
6 upon their "repatriation"; and

7 WHEREAS, The Chinese government has consistently detained,
8 convicted, and imprisoned foreign aid workers who, in accord
9 with United Nations conventions and protocol, assist these
10 North Korean aliens; it has been alleged that, in January of
11 2000, North Korean agents abducted Reverend Kim Dong-shik, a
12 permanent resident of the United States and an advocate for
13 North Korean refugees; his whereabouts and condition remain
14 unknown; and

15 WHEREAS, While the responsibility for domestic refugee
16 resettlement naturally devolves to the South Koreans, who have
17 legally admitted more than any other country with approximately
18 3,800 refugees between 1994 and 2003, the United States should
19 play a leadership role in addressing the plight of these
20 refugees and develop international solutions for this
21 humanitarian crisis; therefore, be it

22 RESOLVED, BY THE SENATE OF THE NINETY-EIGHTH GENERAL
23 ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, that we express our

1 solidarity with the North Korean refugees in their quest for
2 relief from hunger and persecution; and be it further

3 RESOLVED, That we applaud United States Secretary of State
4 John Kerry's initiative for taking steps toward the development
5 of a framework for the resumption of talks with the Democratic
6 People's Republic of Korea and articulate our support for
7 development of a Human Rights and Democracy program that
8 includes meaningful cultural and educational exchanges with
9 the Democratic People's Republic of Korea; and be it further

10 RESOLVED, That we call upon President Barack Obama to
11 appoint a special envoy for human rights in North Korea and
12 implore both houses of the United States Congress to take a
13 leadership role in forming an international framework for
14 resettlement of North Korean refugees both here and abroad; and
15 be it further

16 RESOLVED, That we urge the Illinois Human Rights Commission
17 to take notice of this resolution and to take whatever actions
18 they might deem appropriate and necessary to address the issues
19 raised therein; and be it further

20 RESOLVED, That suitable copies of this resolution be
21 presented to President Barack Obama, Secretary of State John
22 Kerry, the members of the Illinois congressional delegation,

1 and the Illinois Human Rights Commission.